

Outcomes of cesarean deliveries in a Palestinian governmental hospital: a prospective quantitative study

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BACKGROUND

The national population rate of cesarean delivery (CD) in Palestine (20.4%) has dramatically increased in the last two decades and has reached 32% in a governmental hospital. The medically unnecessary use of CD increases maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality and utilizes scarce resources.

OBJECTIVE

Aiming to better understand the challenge of CDs, we analysed the obstetric profile and outcomes of women who underwent CD between September 25, 2011 and January 6, 2012, in a governmental hospital in the West Bank.

METHODS

We reviewed the medical records of all pregnant women admitted to give birth, to be observed or treated for pregnancy complications or complaining of signs of abortion/miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy including postpartum women with complications within seven days after giving birth. The data was collected daily for 3 consecutive months as part of a multi-country study on maternal and neonatal near-miss using the WHO standard form (Individual Form HRP A65661).

RESULTS

Out of 1,583 records reviewed, 1,209 (77.6%) women gave birth; 916 (75.7%) had vaginal birth and 293 (24.2%) CD. The mean age of women with CD was 29 years and 64 (21.8%) of the 293 were primiparae.

Figure 1: Obstetric characteristics of women upon admission (%)

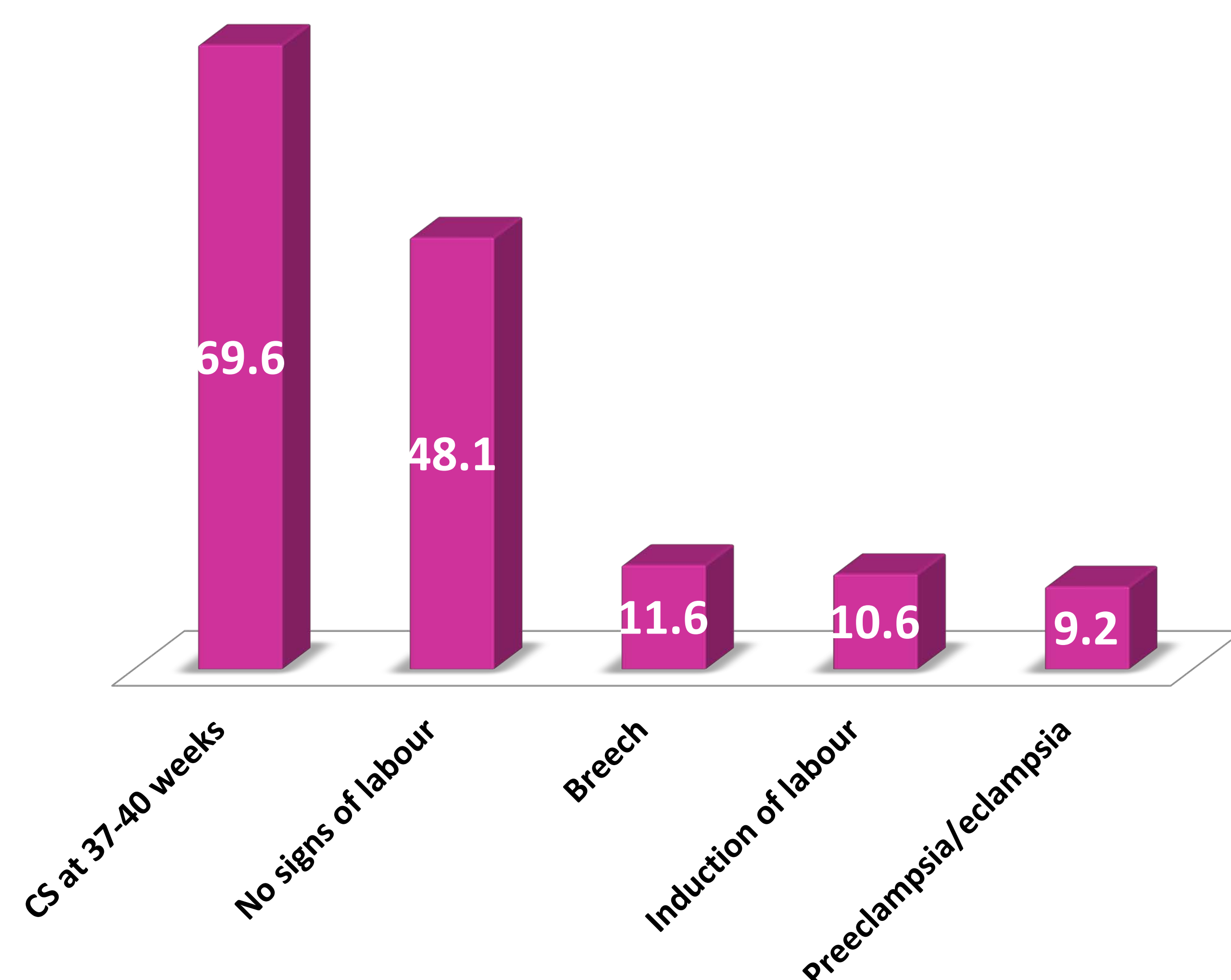


Figure 2: Maternal and neonatal outcomes (%)

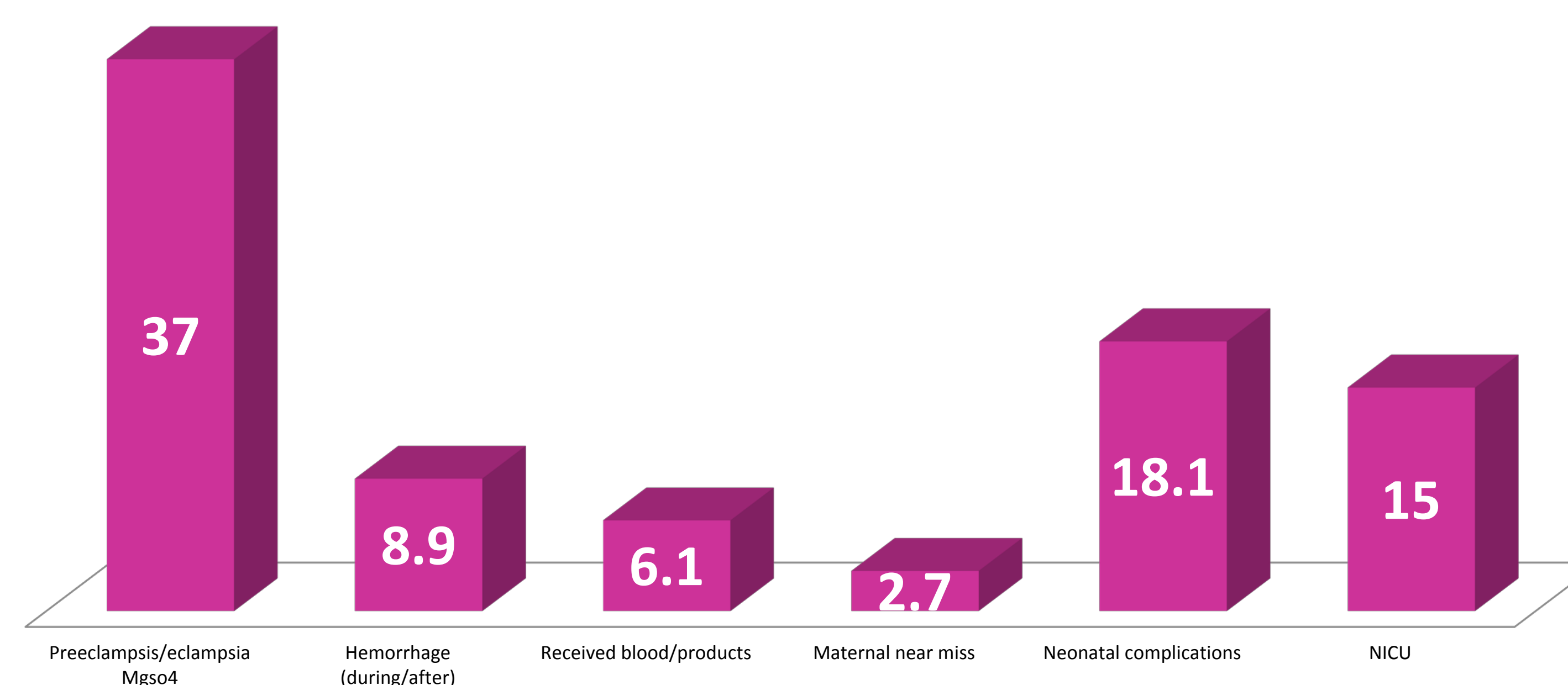


Figure 3: Proportion of women with previous Cesarean section

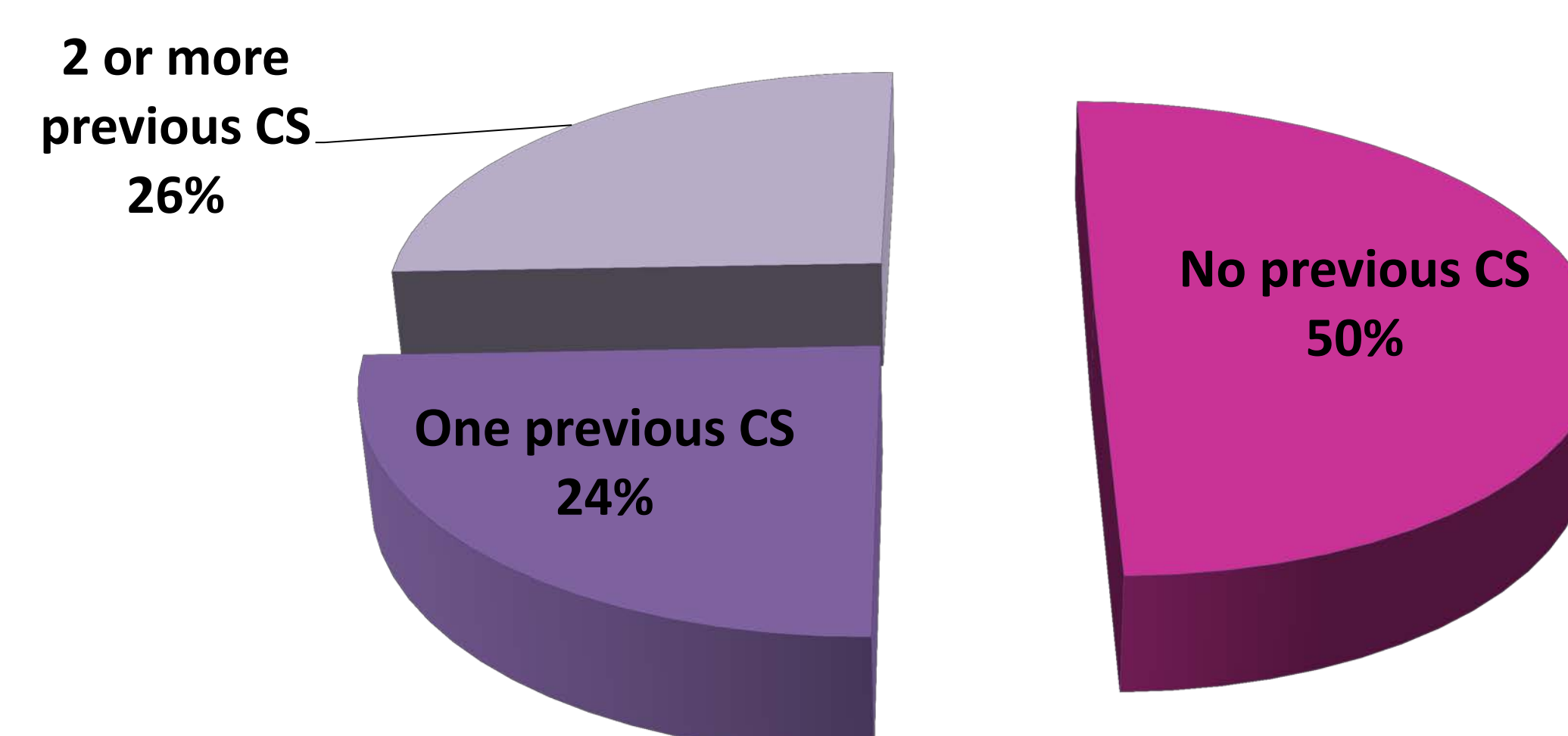
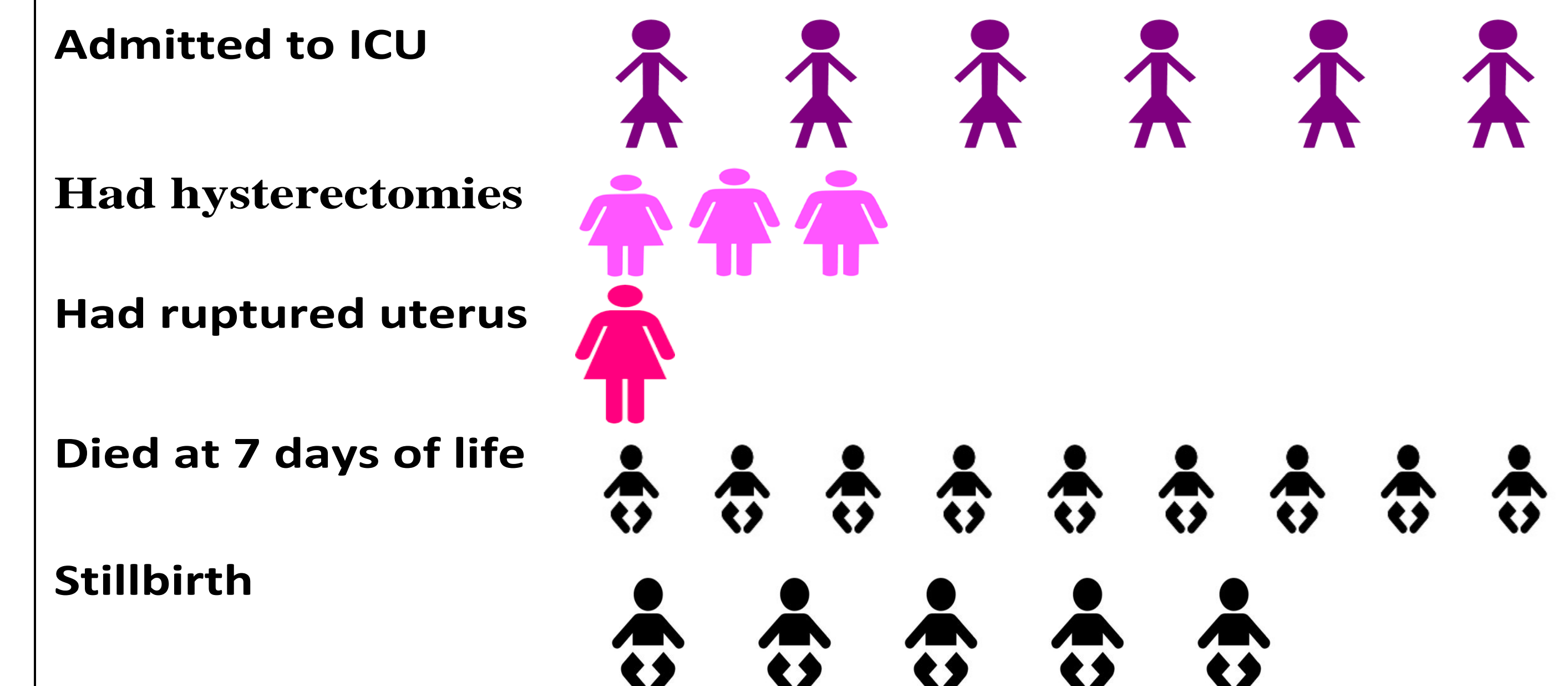


Figure 4: Maternal and neonatal outcomes



INTERPRETATIONS

CDs may have been unnecessary and many women and newborns had morbidities. Rigorous and routine documentation of interventions including indications for CD and maternal audits are important strategies among others to identify medically unnecessary use of CD, poor quality of care and maternal/neonatal morbidities, particularly crucial in the Palestinian context of high fertility, difficult access to facilities and limited resources.

Acknowledgment: This research was funded by a grant from the Implementation Research Platform managed by the World Health Organization (Implementation Research Protocol ID A65770) to the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut for a four-country study on maternal near-miss in public hospitals in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.